

**\*draft\***

**Downtown Providence District Management Authority**

**Board of Directors meeting minutes**

**Thursday, September 21, 2006 8:30am**

**1. Welcome of new Ex-officio Board Member Donald King, Artistic Director of the Providence Black Repertory Theater**

**2. Roll Call**

**Director Granoff called the meeting to order at 8:35.am.**

**Directors present: Michael Corso, Robert Gagliardi, Evan Granoff, Tina Harlow, Richard Lappin, Chris Placco, Maria Ruggieri and Stanley Weiss. Directors absent: Tom Niles. Others present: Donald King, Ex-Officio Board Member; Dan Baudouin, Executive Director of the Providence Foundation; Joelle Crane, Program Manager of the Providence Foundation; Steve Gibson, President of Urban Place Consulting, Frank LaTorre, DID Director of Public Space; Leslie Huikko, DID Office Manager; Frank Zammarelli, Operations Manager for Block-By-Block.**

**3. Approval of the minutes from the Board Meeting of 8/17/06**

**Director Placco motioned to approve the minutes from the August 17, 2006 board meeting. Director Lappin seconded the motion and a roll call vote was held as follows:**

**Michael Corso yes**

**Robert Gagliardi yes**

**Director Granoff yes**

**Director Harlow yes**

**Director Lappin yes**

**Christopher Placco yes**

**Maria Ruggieri yes**

**Director Weiss yes**

**Therefore, the motion passed.**

#### **4. Financial report**

**Steve Gibson of Urban Place Consulting presented the monthly financial reports. Accounts Receivable is on track. Ms. Huikko reports an 88% collection rate to date for the first quarter assessment of this fiscal year. She is confident that when the new owners of many parcels are reached, the assessments will be fully collected.**

**The expenses portion of the Statement of Operations shows that the DID is under-budget in most areas. For the remainder of the fiscal year, the Public Space Management expenses will be lower, as the part-time summer workers have vacated their temporary positions. Mr. Gibson noted that the actual spending is closer to the budgeted line items for this fiscal year, as we were able to base the projected monthly revenue and expenses on a full year of operational experience.**

**Director Placco motioned to accept the August 2006 financial reports**

as presented. Director Lappin seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was held as follows:

Michael Corso yes

Robert Gagliardi yes

Director Granoff yes

Director Harlow yes

Director Lappin yes

Christopher Placco yes

Maria Ruggieri yes

Director Weiss yes

Therefore, the motion passed.

Mr. Gibson presented the final audit report prepared by Lefkowitz, Garfinkel, Champi & Derienzo, P.C. The start-up period of January 1-June 30, 2006 and the fiscal year spanning July 1, 2005-June 30, 2006 were both audited this summer. The report shows that the DPDMA is operating prudently and has the proper financial procedures in place and no material weaknesses were found. The suggestions related to segregation of duties that were made by the auditor have already been implemented to more fully involve the Director of Public Space and Consultant.

The unrestricted retained earnings serve as an operating reserve. (See discussion of capital equipment sinking fund later in this section.) The Directors unanimously stated the importance of maintaining focus on the original mission, which is to provide clean

and safe services to the district. The Directors also re-stated their commitment to service as responsible stewards of the assessment revenue and to continuously review the assessment rate to ensure that the stakeholders are assessed at the lowest possible rate to carry out the work of the DID.

Director Lappin motioned to accept the auditor's report as presented. Director Gagliardi seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was held as follows:

Michael Corso yes

Robert Gagliardi yes

Director Granoff yes

Director Harlow yes

Director Lappin yes

Christopher Placco yes

Maria Ruggieri yes

Director Weiss yes

Therefore, the motion passed.

Mr. Gibson facilitated a discussion on the options for funding the replacement of the DID's capital equipment that was originally purchased through a grant awarded by the Champlin Foundation to the Providence Foundation. The Board agreed that while both leasing replacement equipment and securing grant funding for new purchases are options, it is most prudent to create a sinking fund designated for the replacement of capital equipment. The Board

**agreed to forgo a budget revision at this time. Instead, a notation will be made on the monthly Statement of Position report that identifies the portion of the unrestricted retained earnings that is allocated to equipment replacement.**

**The current interest rates in combination with the DID's savings account balance and the \$100,000 FDIC insurance limitation suggest that a short-term CD could be a good financial decision for the DID at this time.**

**Director Weiss motioned to direct staff the tasks of researching the short-term CD options and rates available for investing \$100,000 at banks within the district and to present this information to the Treasurer, who will take action to purchase the CDs on behalf of the DID. Director Placco seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was held as follows:**

**Michael Corso yes**

**Robert Gagliardi yes**

**Director Granoff yes**

**Director Harlow yes**

**Director Lappin yes**

**Christopher Placco yes**

**Maria Ruggieri yes**

**Director Weiss yes**

**Therefore, the motion passed.**

## **5. Operations Committee Report**

**The Rotary Club indicated to Frank LaTorre that they are interested in sponsoring a project. The Operations Committee recommended sponsoring a community information kiosk, and the Board agreed that this is an appropriate suggestion. Mr. LaTorre is still working with a design team to finalize the plans and secure a reliable cost per kiosk for production and installation. Once this information is obtained, a sponsorship packet will be developed for distribution to potential contributors.**

**The DID has not yet received the CDBG grant money that was awarded in the spring for purchase of additional trash receptacles. The order will not be placed until the funding is received. Frank LaTorre and Frank Zammarelli are working with the Steelyard to ensure that the new version of the receptacles will have better support inside, re-designed legs that are more sturdy and more rust-resistant than the first model.**

**The DID allocated funds for newspaper rack corrals, and research continues to determine the best use of these resources. The Agenda newspaper has indicated a desire to participate in this effort. The DID Ordinance Committee is researching what guidelines and restrictions can be implemented regarding the fixtures put on the street by individual papers. Other cities have been successful in influencing these decisions, according to Steve Gibson. It was agreed that this project is of lower priority than others currently underway.**

The money allocated in last year's DID budget for minor repairs to brick sidewalks has not yet been spent. Frank Zammarelli has completed an inventory of the areas of sidewalk within the district that are most in need of minor brick repairs. Frank LaTorre is working with owners to secure consent for the DID to make these repairs. The DID's allocation to this project will not fund all of the necessary repairs, so Frank LaTorre is working with the Director of Public Works, John Nickelson to encourage that department to help complete the sidewalk repairs that are needed.

The Board discussed the possibility of coordinating requests to individual property owners to supplement funding for many of the improvement projects with which the DID is directly and indirectly involved. While many owners have expressed a willingness to contribute to efforts such as tree-planting, sidewalk repair, and trash receptacle purchasing, no coordinated ask has been made. It was noted that not all owners are eager to pay additional amounts beyond the DID assessment, which is still a relatively new cost of owning property downtown. The Board suspended further discussion of this topic pending further information on staff availability to coordinate such an effort and discussion regarding impact.

## **6. Marketing Report**

DID informational window banners have been installed at 160 Westminster and at the Yenna Center at the corner of Dorrance and

**Weybosset Streets. Three more banners will be placed in the near future.**

**Joelle Crane of The Providence Foundation distributed a comprehensive report containing details of the process for hiring the company that will re-design the DID's website. The goal is to have the DID's website be a more informative communication tool and to support links to other useful websites. Pinpoint Studio was the stand-out applicant, as they had the strongest grasp on the DID's goals for the site, budget and timeline and were hired for the project. The new website has an initial target launch date of 11/1/06.**

**Ms. Crane announced several upcoming events: grand openings for new stores, Gallery Night through the month of November, and a December 8th Tree-lighting ceremony downtown.**

## **7. Report from Urban Place Consulting and Director**

**Steve Gibson reported that Urban Place Consulting staff met with Providence Foundation staff for an initial meeting to address staff responsibilities, workload and prioritization. A follow-up meeting will take place October 9. The Board will be informed regarding outcomes and priorities for staff.**

**The flower planter project has been under constant re-evaluation since the DID took over sole responsibility for the program from GroundWork Providence. The re-built planters that are currently on**

the street will be re-planted with hearty fall plants this week and will then be removed from the streets over the winter. After removal, these planters will be permanently retired due to the high theft rate of the plants, the compromised structural integrity of the planters, and their relative lack of attractiveness. The flower program will re-start in the spring and will consist of hanging planters, continued maintenance of established planted areas in Emmet and LaSalle Squares and near PPAC. A second phase could include attractive low-maintenance urns of higher quality. In addition, a representative from Stamford, CT's BID will be consulting with Providence staff to develop a comprehensive planting plan for the district.

This week, the Responsible Hospitality Institute staff has been in town facilitating a series of roundtable discussions entitled "2020 Vision Leadership Summit." Jim Peters is a gifted facilitator who brought a national perspective to resolving the issues and challenges Providence faces in supporting a vibrant and successful night-life. The outcome is an on-going Responsible Hospitality Partnership consisting of local stakeholders who are committed to creating a vibrant place to socialize while addressing the quality-of-life concerns of all parties. The Board stated their on-going commitment and support and agreed that Frank LaTorre should remain involved in the process and future meetings.

## **8. Report from Block-By-Block**

Frank Zammarelli distributed a report containing statistics for August

2005, August 2006, and cumulative totals of work completed by the DID since February 2005. Passive panhandling statistics have increased because the Clean Team is now involved, whereas previously, it was only the Safety Team. More staff focusing on the issue results in more contact with passive panhandlers, but the number of panhandlers on the street remains constant at a level that is much lower than when the DID began operations. The Safety Team continues their cooperative relationship with the police department and contact with business owners have increased. Graffiti removal is efficient because there is no back-log and graffiti is removed immediately upon being reported.

## **9. Other Business**

The Mayor is convening a committee to select the winner of a competition that was held earlier this summer to design the new waterfront park in downtown that will be developed as a part of the 195 relocation project. This park, or a portion of it, will fall within the district, as 195 serves as one of the borders of the DID. Frank LaTorre is a member of the committee, though his role on the committee is distinct from his role as the Director of Public Space at the DID.

## **10. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.